A Cabinet Question

A Comic Drama
in one act

By
J. R. Planché

1845

A CABINET QUESTION.

A COMIC DRAMA,

IN ONE ACT.

By J. R. PLANCHÉ, Esq.

First Performed at the

THEATRE ROYAL, HAYMARKET,

LONDON.

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BY J. R. PLANCHÉ, ESQ.

AUTHOR OF

"Fortunio," "The White Cat," "Beauty and the Beast,"

"The Sleeping Beauty," "Grist to the Mill,"

"The Fair One with the Golden Locks," "Somebody Else,"

"The Drama at Home," "Graciosa and Percinet,"

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FIRST PERFORMED AT THE

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LONDON:

S. G. FAIRBROTHER, 31, BOW STREET,

AND

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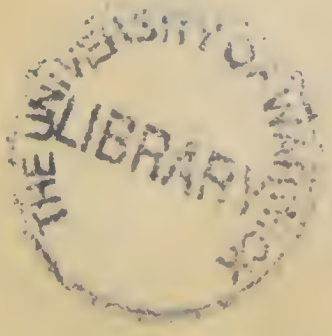

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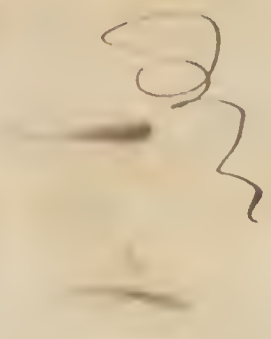


DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

Sir Beaumont Cressy, Bart. - - - - - - - - - Mr. BRINDAL.

Lionel, - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Mr. HOWE,

Rosewood, (Upholsterer and Cabinet Maker) - - - Mr. TILBURY,

Tom, (his Foreman) - - - - - - - - - - Mr. BUCKSTONE,

Carter, - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - Mr. ENNIS.

Miss Mortimer, - - - - - - - - - - - - - Miss TELBIN,

Lucy, (Rosewood's Niece) - - - - - - - Miss JULIA BENNETT,

I

Lucy
Romero

HENRY WEBB

A CABINET QUESTION.

SCENE—AN UPHOLSTERER'S SHOP.

Counting House, L.C.—*Door of Shop*, R.U.E.—*Another*, L. *leading into House.*

LUCY *discovered measuring curtain lace*, R. ROSEWOOD *with a pen in his hand at the Counting House door*, L.U.E.

Rose. I say again, he's good for nothing.

Lucy. My dear uncle, be just! I've heard you say yourself twenty times, "Tom Polish is an excellent workman and hasn't his match for taste and arrangement in London.

Rose. I did say so certainly, some time ago, but now I don't say any such thing.

Lucy Then it is you who are altered and not Tom.

Rose Indeed, and who asked your opinion at all upon the subject?

Lucy. But uncle, when he is absent—

Rose. When he is absent—he's always absent!—either away from his business, or not knowing what he's about, when he's at it,—I've no patience with him!

Lucy. But—

Rose. Hold your tongue—I won't be answered—everything and everybody, conspire to worry me!—I shall go crazy, if matters don't mend soon. Here's a wind up for the year!—nearly five hundred less than last year—not counting bad debts. Some of my best customers lost too—won't buy a stick of new furniture!—nothing but old—no taste now-a-days—all my beautiful modern chairs and cabinets, made from my own design go for nothing, whilst the old fusty-musty lumbering rubbish of Queen Elizabeth's time fetches enormous prices. Every thing must be gothic, or a-la Louis Quatorze at the latest. I'll be bound to say now, that miracle of art—the mahogany cabinet, inlaid with buhl, that the late Colonel Cressy

paid me sixty guineas for down on the nail—a piece of furniture that for ingenuity of construction, and beauty of appearance, was acknowledged unrivalled in the trade—if put up to auction at this moment, would be knocked down for £5. to a broker in Seven Dials.

Lucy. [*Aside.*] That eternal cabinet. If he once begins on that subject! [*Aloud.*] Well, but uncle, all this is not Tom's fault.

Rose. Yes it is, if he had any genius, he'd invent something to turn the tide—to change the fashion—he's young, used to be active, intelligent—but ever since I was fool enough to double his wages—he has thought of nothing but dress, and reads nothing but novels. I begin to believe the rascal's in love.

Lucy. [*Aside.*] So do I.

Rose. Perhaps going to be married.

Lucy. [*Aside.*] I shouldn't be surprized at that.

Rose. Some romantic milliner's apprentice has turned his head.

Lucy. [*Aside.*] Poor uncle, he hasn't the least idea.

Rose. By the bye, has he been to Sir Beaumont Cressy's, this morning?

Lucy. I don't know, perhaps he is gone there now.

Rose. Perhaps! Don't tell me of perhaps—didn't I write it down, here on the slate myself—"Patterns to be taken to Sir Beaumont Cressy's, 12 o'clock Tuesday." Wasn't he here twice about them yesterday, and didn't I promise faithfully that this morning—and here they are, as I live, not gone, and it's near one. Sir Beaumont Cressy, my best customer, the heir at law to all Colonel Cressy's property—a baronet with £ 12,000 a-year, if he has a penny—always furnishing two or three houses for himself or his friends. He'll be offended—go somewhere else, and that vagabond Tom lounging about the street, or galloping off on his own business, and letting mine go to the dogs. If I only catch him—

Lucy. Hu h, uncle, hush—here's the baronet himself.

Enter Sir Beaumont, R.U.E.

Rose. Sir Beaumont, [*bowing*] I'm quite ashamed to see you, Sir Beaumont, really quite ashamed that you should have had the trouble of calling again, about these patterns—I—

Sir B. No trouble, Mr Rosewood, I was passing your door and as you didn't send this morning—

Rose. My man's neglect, I assure you, Sir Beaumont I was most particular in ordering him.

Lucy. And I'm almost sure, sir, he's gone to your house *Rose. Without* the patterns, but I shouldn't be surprised at anything.

Sir B. It's of no great consequence—my principal object in calling was to tell you, I had recommended you to a friend of mine—a very wealthy old lady, likely to prove a good customer. The Hon. Mrs. Crushton, Cavendish Square.

Rose. You're very good, Sir Beaumont, I'm much obliged to you, sir, and shall do my best to give satisfaction.

Sir B. Mrs. Crushton will call here in the course of the day, I believe, if not, you had better wait on her to-morrow morning. She wants new curtains and carpets for the drawing rooms. You'd better write the address down.

Rose. Yes, sir—certainly sir—Mrs. Crushton.

[*Goes into Counting House,* L. U E.

Sir B. The Honorable Mrs. Crushton, 48, Cavendish Square. [*Approaching* Lucy, *who has been opening the patterns for him*] Thank you, Miss Rosewood, but I can't stay to look at the patterns just now—perhaps you'll have the kindness to decide for me—I have perfect confidence in your taste, and I will call again. There is a list of some other things I want—[*in an under tone and dropping a letter into her basket*]—Have the goodness to look it over *privately* and attend to it yourself. Good morning, Mr Rosewood—I may look in again as I return.

Rose. Good morning, Sir Beaumont, [*hurrying out, and opens door for him.*] Allow me, Sir Beaumont—very much obliged to you, sir. [*Exit* Sir B, 2 U.E.R.—Rosewood *bowing.*] Lucy, stay in the shop—if anybody wants me, I'm in the warehouse—a new customer—come that's some comfort. The Hon. Mrs Crushton, Cavendish Square.

[*Exit,* L. 2 E.

Lucy. I can't bear that Sir Beaumont—every time he comes, and that's every day, he does nothing but stare at me—always takes an opportunity, when uncle is busy, to come and talk to me, [*taking out letter.*] What does he mean by "*privately,*" and sealing up the list as if it was a letter—[*opens it.*] Why I declare it is a letter, and a love letter too! with "Adorable Lucy," at the top, and "Yours eternally," at the bottom! An impudent old fool—I'll tell my uncle directly, that I will—no, I won't—I'll tell Tom—dear Tom. If *he* had written this to me now!—but he hasn't the courage to tell me, tho' I know he doats on

me, and that's what makes him so absent, and so dull; but this will provoke him, and make him speak out. Oh, I wish he'd come in! He has been gone so long this morning, Uncle was right—it is very wrong of him to neglect his business so. Ha, there he is, standing in the middle of the street, and staring at a carriage—oh! [*screams*] he'll be run over! Tom, Tom! Oh, my gracious! if the pole didn't knock his hat off!

Enter TOM, *hastily, his hat in his hand muddy,* R.U.E.

Tom. Stupid fool! why didn't you look where you were driving to?—my best hat. 14s. 6d. only yesterday.

Lucy. You're not hurt Tom?

Tom. Hurt, no—but look at my hat—best Paris velvet! If I couldn't, [*aside*] and it wasn't her after all.

Lucy Never mind—if you are not hurt, yourself.—But how it must have frightened you.

Tom. Must it—then get me a glass of water.

Lucy [*Pouring some out of a Decanter*] Here, here's some, Tom—it's quite clean.

Tom. Thankye, and now drink it yourself, for you're much more frightened than I am,—why you're all in a shake, Lucy.

Lucy. I dare say I am—Uncle's so angry.

Tom. With you?

Lucy. No, with you—

Tom. Oh, stuff!

Lucy. But it's no stuff, sir. He says you're an idle fellow, and he'll discharge you.

Tom. With all my heart—where's my book?

[*Pulls one out of a drawer.*

Lucy. You're never going to read, Tom?

Tom. What's that to you?

[*Sits in an arm chair and reads.*

Lucy. How rude, you are! but you don't know what has happened this morning.

Tom. And I don't care.

Lucy. But you will care—we've got a new customer, and I have had a love letter.

Tom. A love letter—who from?

Lucy. Guess.

Tom. Stuff—I can't!

Lucy. A man of property—a person of consequence.

Tom. Oh, pooh!

Lucy. Ah, now you're angry.

Tom. Not I.

Lucy. Then you don't believe me, but it's a fact, here it is—from Sir Beaumont Cressy!

Tom. The old scoundrel—I'll break his head.

Lucy. No, Tom, no now—don't be violent—I hate him, I do indeed, so don't be jealous of him!

Tom. Jealous!—I'm not jealous—what should I be jealous for? If you choose to put up with the insult, that's another affair.

Lucy. [*Aside.*] He *is* jealous—as jealous as he can be, but he won't own it. Why should you call it an insult?—suppose he means to make me Lady Cressy?

Tom. But I don't suppose any such thing—I know the old vagabond too well—if he tells you so, he don't mean it.

Lucy. I don't know what he tells me, for I have not even read the letter.

Tom. You have not—give it to me—let me read it—[*aside*]—I should like to see the fashionable style.

Lucy. There it is, you may keep it if you like.

Tom. [*Reading.*] "I love you to distraction."

Lucy. You don't say so Tom!

Tom. *I* don't say so; he says so, but he does not mean it, so I tell you now. [*Reading to himself.*] The impudent villain actually proposes to furnish lodgings for you in any situation you may prefer, and expects an answer, when he calls again, Oh, if you'd only let me give him the answer.

Lucy. No, no, Tom—you'll get yourself into trouble, and indeed, indeed, I hate and despise the wretch!

Tom. Well, to be sure, I've no right, as I said before, it's no business of mine, so do just as you like, only it's infamous to dare to write such a letter to a respectable girl that any man might be proud of for a wife.

Lucy. Really, do you mean that Tom—should you be proud of me for your wife?

Tom. Certainly—that is—if—

Lucy. Oh, dear Tom, there don't say any more, we understand one another at last.

Tom. No, we don't—if you think—

Lucy. Yes we do—if you say—

Tom. But, I don't say—

Lucy. But you did say—

Enter LIONEL, R.U.E.

Lio. Heyday! heyday! "I don't say," and "you did say," what's all this about? a lover's quarrel!

Lucy. [*timidly*] Yes, sir.

Tom No, sir,—no such thing, we were talking politics, and when people talk politics it always seems like quarrelling.

Lio. And generally ends in it, so perhaps it was lucky I came in as I did.

Tom. Very, Sir.

Lucy. [*aside*] It was very *un*lucky, just as I had provoked him to say something decided.

Lio Miss Rosewood, would you be kind enough to ask your uncle for my account; I wish to settle it.

Lucy. Certainly, sir, but there's no hurry, the furniture has hardly been sent home.

Lio. But I am going out of town immediately, perhaps abroad; and as I may be absent some time, I wish to have all money matters put straight before I go.

Tom. [*aside*] That's just my wish, but I can't make wishing do it.

Lucy. I'll send my uncle to you, sir, he's in the warehouse. [*aside*] Poor Tom, he's horribly jealous, about the letter I can see. [*Exit*, L. 2 E.

Tom. Won t you take a chair, sir, there's plenty of 'em in the shop.

Lio. Thank you Polish—thank you. [*Sits*]

Tom. Didn't I hear you say you were going abroad, sir,

Lio. Yes, Polish; to China, I believe.

Tom. To China—everybody goes to China, now-a days! If I may be so bold, Mr Manvers, what are you going there for?

Lio. To die, I hope. [*Rises hastily.*

Tom. To die! Goodness gracious, Mr Manvers, what's the matter, sir?

Lio. Eh—oh, nothing—I mean to purchase a commission and die for my country, as a soldier should do.

Tom. Law, sir, go for a soldier, and all the way to China, too—when your poor dear dead uncle, Colonel Cressy, was so much against your entering the army.

Lio. Then my poor dear dead uncle, should have acted up to his promises, and made me his heir. If he had left me his £12,000 a-year, or only half of it there would have been no necessity for doing so.

Tom. And everybody thought he would sir, for he was very fond of you, and didn't like the baronet—I've heard him call him all manner of names.

Lio. You were a favorite with my uncle too, I wonder he didn't leave you something.

Tom. The poor old gentleman, didn't know he was going so suddenly, or he might have done many things; but he gave me five pounds the day before he died. I went to him with an account, by his own direction—it was £.125, he drew a check for £.130, and told me to keep the change for a Christmas box. He *was* a customer—now he's gone, I think I'd better go to China, as well as you, sir. I'd rather die, than lead such a wretched life, as I'm like to do.

Lio. Why Polish, what's the matter with you? Are you in love, or in debt, that you talk so despairingly?

Tom. Both, sir. both. Head over ears in both. Oh, Mr Manvers, I've known you ever since I was a boy, sir, and I don't mind telling you—I don't know what will become of me.

Lio. Poor fellow, I was right then—it was a lover's quarrel—Miss Rosewood, eh?—your master's niece?

Tom. Lord bless you, sir—I'm not in love with her—tho' I'm half afeard, she is with me, and that only makes matters worse. It's a lady, Mr Manvers—a real lady—a woman of fortune—family.

Lio. The deuce!

Tom. It's quite a romance, sir—I went to Greenwich for a holiday—strolled thro' the park on to Blackheath—saw an open carriage come dashing along, with two ladies in it, and no coachman on the box; I ran forward and caught the horses by the head, just as they were on the very brink of the hill. Another minute, nothing on earth could have stopped them—and Heaven knows what might have happened—well, there I held them, till some people ran out from the *Green-man*—and the Coachman, came limping up, and then I looked at the ladies—and the ladies looked at me. Oh, Mr. Manvers!—there was an old one—she thanked me, I believe, for I didn't hear a word she said, for the other smiled at me. Such a smile—oh, Mr. Manvers! I never saw such a smile in a picture. It seemed to say a whole bushel of things—one sweeter than another—and when *she* spoke, oh, Mr. Manvers—

Lio. You heard every word, no doubt.

Tom. Heard them—I hear nothing else, all day and all night. "To whom are we so deeply indebted?" That's not a bit like the voice, mind. Did you ever hear the talking Canary bird?

Lio. Never.

Tom. No more did I—but I should think it might be something like that.

Lio. And when you told her who you were—

Tom. *I* tell her—catch me—I tell that angel, I was a journeyman cabinet maker, out for a holiday—I could have died sooner!

Lio. Then what did you tell her?—that you were a cabinet minister?

Tom. No, but I evaded the question as if I had been born one! I didn't tell her what I was at all—I only said my name was Alphonso de Montmorency.

Lio. Alphonso de Montmorency!

Tom. Well, it was a capital name—wasn't it? and one that was running in my head—for I had been reading a novel, in which a very fine gentleman was so called—and *she* seemed to be struck by it too.

Lio. I've no doubt she was.

Tom. And then she whispered the old lady, and the old lady handed me her card and hoped I would do her the honor to call—and then the young one smiled again, and the carriage drove off and left me alone in the world!

Lio. On Blackheath, in front of the *Green-man*—what a romantic situation!

Tom. Don't laugh at me, Mr. Manvers—it's been no laughing matter for me, I can tell you, but ruin, sir, ruin!

Lio. Indeed; when you called then—

Tom. I never called—I hadn't the courage—I knew she'd find out who I was, and then there'd be an end of me that way—but I've seen her again and again—in the park—at the opera.—Oh the kid-gloves—and the washing I had to pay for, to say nothing of the tailor's bill.

Lio. The opera! why you've not been so silly?

Tom. I have sir—8s. 6d. for ten Saturdays running, and she was only there twice—but I had two bows—two smiles from her, and thought them cheap, at the price!

Lio. And who is the bewitching creature may I—

Tom. No, Mr. Manvers, that's a secret shall go down with me to the grave, and that'll be soon, for I can't stand it much longer The agony I endure in skulking through the streets, in my working dress, with a curtain pole, and bundle of bed-furniture under my arm—and the flurry and fatigue of racing after the wrong carriage, when I'm fit to be seen, and the money I owe the tailor!

Lio. How much may that be, Tom?

Tom. More than £20., Mr. Manvers, so the new act can't save me. I must go to prison. A dungeon yawns for me!

Lio. Is it more than £30?

Tom. No, sir, it's twenty-seven pounds three and nine-pence. I could pay the three and nine-pence.

Lio. Well, well, don't distress yourself, there are £.30; pay your bill, and don't get into debt again.

Tom. Mr. Manvers, no, sir, I can't—I can't, indeed—I beg your pardon, but you're not rich, sir; and you're going abroad.

Lio. Put it in your pocket, Tom, and say no more about it, I have been as silly as you in my time; nay, perhaps at this very moment—but it does not signify. I am not rich, as you say, but I can spare so much at present, and if ever I should return to England, and you are able, and wish to repay me, well and good. If I die, it's a legacy paid in advance to little Tom Polish, the son of my uncle's coach-man, with whom I've played at marbles many a day, before I went to Harrow.

Tom. Mr. Manvers, if ever I forget—

Lio. Hold your tongue—here's your master.

Enter Rosewood, L. 2. E.

Rose. Sorry to detain you, Mr. Manvers, your account is made out, but I should not have thought of sending it in before Christmas—hope you did not come on purpose, sir; but money, of course, is always acceptable. Take off ten per cent. for cash, of course; that will make it £.26 exactly, sir—a mere trifle—not the least hurry. Tom, run for a shilling stamp.

Lio. Don't trouble yourself about a stamp, for I have only a ten pound note left.

Rose. I beg your pardon, but I understood from my niece, Lucy—

Tom. [*Aside.*] And he's given me—[*to* Lionel, *and offering him the money*] take it back, Mr. Manvers; I can wait—

Lio. [*Aside*] No, no, there's no occasion. [*to* Rose] Quite right, Mr. Rosewood; I'll write you a cheque for the amount, and you can put your name at the back of it. It will be quite satisfactory. I brought the cash out with me, but have paid it away. I suppose it makes no difference to you.

Rose. None in the least, sir; I'm sure your cheque is as good as a bank note. Will you walk into my counting-house?

Lio. Perhaps you will allow me to write a short letter here also?

Rose. By all means, Mr. Manvers, [*showing* LIONEL *in*, L.U.E.] Tom, you idle rascal, what are you doing there with your hands before you?

Tom. They were not before me—they were behind me.

Rose. Don't be impertinent, sir. Where have you been all this morning? Didn't I tell you to go to Sir Beaumont's?

Tom. Well, I did go.

Rose. You did no such thing, sir. He's just been here.

Tom. Then how could he know I hadn't just been there?

Rose. Humph! well, but you went without the patterns you were to show him.

Tom. How could I show him the patterns, if he wasn't at home?

Rose. Tom, you'll drive me to do something desperate. Harkye, sirrah, I'll try you once more—you'll have very likely to wait on a new customer to-morrow for orders, No. 40, Cavendish Square.

Tom. [*Starting*] Where?

Rose. 40, Cavendish Square.

Tom. No such thing!

Rose. How do you mean,—no such thing?

Tom. It's a mistake—it's the wrong number, or the wrong square.

Rose How dare you contradict me, you impudent dog? Hav'nt I written it down myself, from Sir Beaumont's own mouth.

Tom. I don't care, it must be wrong—48, *Portman* Square.

Rose. Cavendish Square!

Tom. Then its 38, or 58.

Rose. Is the fellow mad? I tell you it's 48—can you read?—48—the Honorable Mrs. Crushton.

[*Thrusting the slate into his hands.*

Tom. Murder!

[*Drops slate on* ROSEWOOD'S *toes and sinks into a chair.*

Rose. Confound it what's the matter with the fool!

Tom. And I'm to go there to-morrow!

Rose. Without fail—or—

Tom. [*Starting up.*] Never!

Rose. Never! we'll see that sirrah.

Tom. I'd die sooner!

Rose. Eh?

Tom. [*Aside.*] Go to that house! The very mansion *she* dwells in. Go there, and be seen by her, with an apron

rolled round me, and a paper cap on my head, fixing up curtain poles, or putting down carpets!—or—oh—my heart sickens at the thought. I repeat never!

Rose. Oh, very well—very well—I'm glad it's come to this—you positively refuse to obey my orders?

Tom. Those orders, I do.

Rose. Then you'll walk out of my house, on Saturday, sir.

Tom. With the greatest pleasure. I'll go now if you like.

Enter Lucy, L. 2 E.

Lucy. Go! where?

Tom. Out of the house—out of the parish—out of the kingdom—out of the world!

Rose. With all my heart! so that I am rid of you!

Lio. [*Calls from Counting House*] Mr. Rosewood.

Rose. Coming, sir.

Tom. You owe me thirty shillings.

Rose. I won't pay you a farthing, you may summons me if you like. I've done with you. [*Exit*, L.U.E.

Lucy. Oh, Tom, Tom! I knew this would happen.

Tom. Good bye, Lucy—good bye for ever!

Lucy. For ever!—oh, oh, my dear Tom, I—I'm fainting!

Tom. Fainting! [*Catches her.*] Lucy, Lucy—good gracious, what shall I do with her? Poor girl, she really is in love with me! What a shocking thing! What a horrid fascinating wretch I am!—I shall be the death of her—such a pretty little girl too—Lucy, my darling!

Lucy. Am I really your darling?

Tom. [*Aside.*] Oh, damn it, she heard me! No—that is—

Lucy. [*Shutting her eyes.*] Oh!

Tom. Yes, yes, you are—anything, if you will but stand up.

Miss Mortimer *appears at the Shop Door with a Footman*, R.U.2.

Miss M. Tell my aunt she had better stay in the carriage—I shall not be a minute.

Tom. Eh—distraction—Miss Mortimer!

[*Puts* Lucy *suddenly into a large chair with it's back to* Miss M. *and stands before it.*

Miss M. [*Advancing and seeing* Tom] Ah, surely, 'tis Mr. Montmorency.

Tom. [*Bowing confusedly.*] Madam—Miss Mortimer—I—I—I'm—quite delighted—most fortunate—[*aside.*] If it wasn't for the chair, I should fall.

Miss M. Do you deal with Mr. Rosewood? I'm told he's an excellent upholsterer.

Tom. Oh, yes, pretty fair, as times go. I looked in just—to look out—[*suddenly making a dart at* LIONEL'S *hat and gloves, which he has left on the table.*] Good morning, madam.

Miss M I beg your pardon, but before you go, would you be kind enough to call somebody to me—I see no one to attend—

Tom. Certainly—[*aside.*] What the deuce shall I do? [*Calls faintly*] Shop!

Miss M. [*Smiling.*] I suspect you must call a little louder to reach anybody's ears, in this establishment.

Tom. Shop!--I'll ring the bell, as I go out.

Miss M. Stay, Mr. Montmorency—here's a young person.

Tom. A young woman, so there is, I declare fast asleep.

Lucy I'm not fast asleep, Mr. Polish. I'm wide awake.

Miss M. Mr. Polish?

Tom [*Aside*] There, there, its all over; she'll be wide awake now!

Miss M. Is your name Polish? I thought—

Tom. Yes, yes, Polish is one of my names. I'm often called Polish—an old family name. Indeed, my father's name was Polish, but I took the name of De Montmorency, in consequence of—by desire of—[*tugging at glove*] Rot the glove! I can't get it on!

Enter LIONEL, *from Counting House,* L.U.E.

Lio. Well, now my friend, I'm going.

[*Starts, seeing* Miss M.

Tom. [*Aside and tugging at the glove.*] Curse the glove, I can't get it off.

Miss M. Lionel here. [*Aside*

Lio. [*Aside.*] No, I cannot speak to her.

[*Looks about for his hat.*

Lucy. If you want your hat, Tom's got it.

Miss M. Tom!

Tom. [*Aside.*] Ah, choak you. [*Gives* LIONEL *his hat and gloves*] I beg your pardon, I took it for mine.

Lio. Good bye, Tom. If we never meet again, [*Speaks so that his words may be applied to* Miss M.] Heaven bless you. [*Exit,* R.U.E.

Miss M. What can this mean? And where is he going? If I dared but ask—

Lucy. Here's your hat, Tom, and your apron.

Tom. [*Aside.*] I shall strangle her or myself.

Miss M. Apron! Is not this gentleman—?

Lucy. That gentleman, madam, is Tom Polish, our foreman, a very clever young man, in his business, and it's a pity anybody should try to make him above it. [*Exit*, L. U. E.

Miss M. Is this true?

Tom. Too true, there's no denying it, but if you'll only—

Miss M. I m delighted to hear it?

Tom. Eh!

Miss M. I can say to you now, what I could not have dared had you been in a higher position in society!

Tom. Madam, I, [*aside.*] What do I hear? She loves me, loves me for myself!

Miss M. I must seize this opportunity, we may be interrupted. I know I can trust you.

Tom. With your life! [*Aside.*] Happy Polish!

Miss M. You know the gentleman, who was here just now?

Tom. Mr. Manvers? intimately.

Miss M. His parting words to you implied a doubt that you might meet again?

Tom. To be sure. He's going to China.

Miss M. To China!—wherefore? Do you know his motive?

Tom. To make his fortune of course.

Miss M. No, no, it is not that—he has heard a rumour of my approaching marriage.

Tom. Eh, your—

Miss M. With Sir Beaumont Cressy—

Tom. With Sir Beaumont!

Miss M. He believes me to have consented.

Tom. But you haven't! No, you can't, when another loves—adores you.

Miss M. Ah, if he really did so, would he suspect my truth—desert me at such a moment.

Tom. But he won't! He'll die first.

Miss M. He has said so? You are in his confidence? Oh, then fly to him—assure him, that I will never be the wife of Beaumont—say that I must see him, if but for a moment.

Tom. Him! Who?

Miss M. Lionel!—Lionel Manvers.

Tom. Oh!

Miss M. Hush, some one is coming. I will return in half an hour. I rely on you. [*Exit hastily.* R.U.E.

Tom. I shall never survive it. [*Sits on Sofa.*

Re-enter ROSEWOOD *and* LUCY, L.U.E.

Rose. A lady!—where is she then?

Lucy. Gone, I suppose. I don't see her any where. Oh! look here, uncle—look at Tom. He's ill!

Tom. Dying!

Rose. Dying!

Lucy. Oh, Tom, don't say so.

Tom. It's a fact. You've done it between you.

Rose. Nonsense! Nonsense! Don't be a fool, Tom. If you're sorry for what you've done, I'll say no more about it. Stand up, man—there's nothing the matter with you!

Tom. Nothing the matter!

Rose. Who was the lady?

Tom. Don't mention her!

Rose. Why, what did she want?

Tom Mr. Manvers.

Rose. Oh, Mr. Manvers. I thought she came on business. Very well, then. Now get to work, like a good boy, and I'll look over your conduct this morning. [*Exit.*

Lucy. There, Tom, now uncle's forgiven you, and I forgive you: be comforted.

Tom. Comforted! When I've been betrayed, deceived, scorned, insulted, trampled upon. Lucy, she loves another!

Lucy. So much the better.

Tom. Lucy!

Lucy. I say, so much the better. It's a real gentleman, no doubt; somebody in her own rank of life. I'm sure it would have been a shocking thing if she had been in love with you.

Tom. Lucy!

Lucy. A pretty situation she'd have been in, when she found you were only a journeyman cabinet maker. It might have broken her heart to have given you up; or she would have married you, and been wretched for life.

Tom. Miss Rosewood, I can bear a great deal—

Lucy. You must bear to hear the truth, because it'll do you a great deal of good. *Mr. de Montmorency*, ain't you ashamed of passing yourself off for a man of fashion, in order to ensnare a young lady's affections

Tom. Ensnare! Miss Rosewood! I saved that young lady from destruction—stopped her runaway horses on the brink of a precipice!

Lucy. Well, then, she has returned the obligation; for I'm sure you were going to destruction as fast as possible. Tom! Tom! don't be a goose: let great folks marry great folks, and little ones little ones; that's the way to be happy, and so I tell you now. [*Exit*, R.D. 2 E.

Tom. It must be the truth! it's so very disagreeable. Have I really been a goose—what a startling discovery! and I might have been something worse, upon my life I might! She's a sensible girl that Lucy, and doats upon me, and I've behaved like an ungrateful brute to her, and all for a lady, who tells you as plain as she can speak, "I do love somebody, but it isn't you." And, to make the matter worse, that somebody is my friend, the playmate of my infancy, my benefactor! and I was his rival! He has given me money to pay for the very clothes in which I would have robbed him of the woman he adores! Here are the spoils of the unconscious victim! [*Produces notes.*] I can't bear the sight of them. I'll pay the tailor, and get rid of them for ever!

Enter LIONEL, R.U.E.

Returned to tax me wtth my treachery.

Lio. My dear Tom! you can do me a great service.

Tom. [*Aside*] His dear Tom—he is yet ignorant—[*to him*] name it, Mr. Manvers.

Lio. I left a lady with you.

Tom. You did, you did. I don't attempt to deny it.

Lio. Are you likely to see her again?

Tom. Certain She will return in a few minutes.

Lio. Hah! Then give her this note.

Tom. [*Aside.*] Be firm my heart. [*Aloud.*] Mr. Manvers, give it her yourself.

Lio. You refuse?

Tom. Mr Manvers, don't misunderstand me. I say, give it her yourself, because she wishes to see you, and you can take that opportunity.

Lio. Wishes to see me! Impossible!

Tom. Nothing is impossible! I feel *that* at the present moment.

Lio. Miss Mortimer cannot desire to see me.

Tom. Why not: you love her, Mr. Manvers, and she loves you.

Lio. Loves me!

Tom. Fondly, devotedly. [*Aside.*] Bravo, Tom! Noble Tom! you redeem yourself in my opinion. I'm proud of you, Tom. [*Shakes hands with himself.*]

Lio. What does this mean. how can you be aware? and if so, why has she cast me off—accepted the proposal of another?

Tom. She has done no such thing. She won't hear of another. She has refused even—ahem!—she has requested me to assure you that she will never be the wife of Sir Beaumont.

Lio. Can this be true?

Tom. If you doubt me, Mr. Manvers, ask her yourself, for she is here.

Enter Miss Mortimer, R.U.E.

Lio. Emily!

Miss M. Lionel! This is indeed kind, Mr. Polish.

[*Aside to him.*

Tom. [*Aside.*] Tom! Tom! you're a hero! I conldn't have believed it of you. To see this, and live!

Lio. Stay here, Tom—don't leave the shop, in case any one should come.

Miss M. Yes, pray stay, Mr. Polish: go on with your work—don't mind us.

Tom. [*Aside.*] What an excruciating situation! But, so much the better: I glory in it! "Go on with your work." I will!—I will complete the sacrifice; she shall see me in my apron, in the exercise of that humble but honest occupation from which her fatal charms had seduced me.

[*Takes off his coat, ties on apron. and begins to work on an arm-chair or sofa which is to be stuffed or re-covered.*

Miss M. I have left my aunt at a sale in this neighbourhood, and hurried back to obtain, at any risk, an explanation of your conduct. Why have you absented yourself from our house: why this sudden determination to leave England?

Lio. This letter, which I received from your aunt, is a sufficient answer to your question.

Miss M. [*Takes it.*] From my aunt!

Lio. You see she desires me, at your request, to abstain from presenting myself in Cavendish Square, as you have accepted the proposals of my cousin, Sir Beaumont.

Miss M. I never authorized—I never knew of this letter; nor is it true that I have accepted Sir Beaumont. You, Lionel, and you alone.

[*Tom hammers furiously.*

Lio. Tom! my dear fellow, we can't hear one another speak.

Miss M. From the moment my aunt knew that your uncle had died without a will, and that Sir Beaumont, as heir-at-law, came in for the whole of his property—

Tom. Stop!

Both. What' the matter?

Tom. I've swallowed a tack! Never mind—there—it s down now. Something has just struck me—something I never thought of before. Mr. Manvers, did your uncle really die without making a will?

Lio. None has ever been found. His solicitor never knew of any such instrument: every search was made without success.

Tom. Do you remember a cabinet that stood in his dressing room? Mahogany, inlaid with buhl.—

Lio. Perfectly. Mr. Rosewood made it.

Tom. I know he did, and so does everybody that knows Mr. Rosewood. It was a fancy of his, and he believes there never was such a piece of furniture in the world. Was that searched?

Lio. Of course, thoroughly.

Tom. By Mr. Rosewood?

Lio. I can't say that.

Tom. Then there's a chance yet. It's as full of secret springs and sliding panels as a castle in a melo-drama. Do you know where it is now?

Lio. The last time I saw it, it was in the little yellow breakfast room, at Sir Beaumont's.

Tom. At Sir Beaumont's. It must be rummaged.

Miss M. But, by whom? Sir Beaumont would never allow it; particularly if he suspected the cause.

Tom. I can't tell; but it must done.

Lio. 'Tis useless, my good fellow. Depend upon it, if a will had existed it would have been found. No, no, there is nothing left for me but to seek my fortune in India.

Tom. And leave Miss Mortimer to be forced to marry your cousin, or some other rich rascal. I beg your pardon for calling your cousin a rascal: but—no, no, Mr. Manvers, *I* won't put up with that; I will not suffer anybody to marry Miss Mortimer but you.

Lio. I thank you, for your zeal in my cause; but—

Tom. Mr. Manvers, you shall not leave London till I choose, sir. Shall he madam?

Miss M. Certainly not, whilst there is a hope.

Tom. There, there. You hear Miss Mortimer! I'm your prime minister, in this affair, and I make it a *cabinet question!*

Enter LUCY *with a letter,* R.D. 2 E.

Lucy. Miss Mortimer again!

Tom. [*Aside to her.*] With Mr. Manvers, her lover, her intended.

Lucy. Oh, that's as it should be. But look here, Tom, what shall I do with this impudent Sir Beaumont. Here's another letter he's sent me.

Tom. Sir Beaumont! Let me see, let me see. "My angel."—The devil!—"As you may not like to write an answer to my note, and as there may be no opportunity for conversation at your own house, I send with this a bouquet, which if I see you wearing in your bosom, when I call, I shall consider it a favourable sign, and will manage to slip a pass key into your hands, which will let you through my garden into the little yellow breakfast room." Hah! "The little yellow breakfast room, that opens into it." Hurrah! Where's the bouquet?

Lucy. I threw it away.

Tom. Threw it away! You've thrown away a fortune!

Lucy. Tom, I'm ashamed of you!

Tom. You don't know what you're talking about. Where did you throw it?

Lucy. I tossed it out of the window.

Tom. Into the street?

Lucy. No; out of the back window.

Tom. Run and find it.

Lucy. I shall do no such thing.,

Tom. Lucy! I am going to use a very strong expression! You are a very pretty girl!

Lucy. Well, I'm sure.

Tom. But if ever you expect me to marry you, fetch me that nosegay!

Lucy. And you will, if I do?

Tom. As sure as my name's Polish. Do as I bid you and ask no questions. I'll love you for ever, and marry you as soon as you please.

Lucy Then I'll fish out the nosegay, if it's at the bottom of the water butt. [*Exit,* R.D. 2 E.

Tom. There's affection! there's devotion! And I never stopped *her* runaway horses—never bought yellow kids, and opera tickets, for *her* sake. Perhaps that's the reason. O woman! woman! you're a riddle! It would save man a great deal of trouble if he'd give you up! But he won't! [*To Manvers and Miss M., who advance.*] Oh, Mr. Manvers, such a piece of luck. There's a providence in it I'm sure.

Lio In what—in that letter?

Tom. Yes, in this letter. In a few minutes I shall have the key of the yellow breakfast room, and—Hah! here comes the baronet with Mr. Rosewood!

Miss M. Sir Beaumont! Should he see us here—

Tom. This way, into the warehouse.

[*Exeunt* Miss M *and* Lionel, L. 2 E.

Enter Lucy *with a bouquet,* R.D. 2 E.

Lucy. Here it is!

Tom. Pop it into your bosom, then, for here's Sir Beaumont!

Lucy. Well, but then he'll think—

Tom. Mrs. Polish that is to be, let him think what he pleases!

Lucy. Well, if ever—[*Puts the bouquet as directed.*]

Enter Sir Beaumont *and* Rosewood, R.U E.

Rose. Bless my soul, you don't say so, Sir Beaumont, what Mademoiselle Pirouette—after all your liberality.—

Sir B. It's a melancholy fact, Mr. Rosewood. [*Aside.*] Hah! By Jove! she wears the bouquet

Rose. Gone off with a Polish Count! not worth a farthing, perhaps!

Sir B. But what he could pawn the diamonds for, which I gave her.

Rose. And all that splendid new furniture which I sent into her house, by your order, Sir Beaumont!

Sir B. Selling off at this moment! "The property of a lady gone abroad." [*Aside to Lucy.*] How grateful I am for this attention to my request.

Lucy. Sir! [Tom *makes signs to her to be quiet.*]

Rose. Bless my soul! all that beautiful furniture going no doubt for next to nothing.

Sir B. A slight difference, no doubt, between your account and the auctioneer's, Mr. Rosewood. [*Aside to Lucy.*] Here's the key—lose no time—I will follow.

Lucy. [*Aside.*] Oh dear me! what am I to do now? *Hesitating and looking at* Tom, *who signs for her to take it.*] Law, Tom, you can't mean it!

Sir B. [*Aside.*] Fear nothing; all is arranged; you will see no one—hasten; I will keep your uncle in conversation. [*She looks at* Tom, *who signifies impatience,*]

Tom. [*Aside to her.*] Take it, I tell you; I'm going with you. [*She takes the key.*]

Sir B. She's mine. [*To* Rose.] Yes, my dear sir, the broker will have a bargain, no doubt.

Rose. All spick and span new; not been in the house a month.

Sir. B. All, except an old cabinet that belonged to the Colonel, and—

Rose. A cabinet! one that belonged—not the mahogany and buhl one, which I made him eight years ago?

Sir B. Exactly. I believe you did make it.

[Tom. *who has been encouraging Lucy to leave the shop, suddenly stops her, at* Rosewood's *exclamation.*

Rose. Believe I did. Yes, I believe I did, too! The most perfect piece of workmanship—and that is gone, too?

Sir B. The lady took a fancy to it, and I set no value whatever on the old lumbering thing!

Rose. Old lumbering thing! Sir Beaumont, you'll excuse me; it was a miracle of cabinet making. If I thought I should be in time, I'd run now and buy it in at any price.

Tom [*comes forward*]. Buy it in! Han't you got it, Sir Beaumont, in your house?

Sir B. Eh? No.

Tom. Not in the little yellow breakfast room?

Sir B. Certainly not. I hope to see a much prettier piece of furniture in its place shortly. [*Looking at Lucy.*]

Tom [*Aside*]. Do you? Lucy! don't stir a step. [*to* Sir B.] Where is it now, sir, did you say?

Rose. In the sale of Mademoiselle's Pirouette's furniture

Tom. On the premises?

Sir B. No. She made a clear house of it.

Tom. Confusion! Where, then?

Sir B. Heyday! whar's that to you, sir?

Tom [*Aside to Lucy*]. Throw away that bouquet—give back the key.

Sir B. [*Aside*]. What is she doing? [*Lucy offers him the key, and throws away the bouquet.*] What does this mean?

Tom. Sir Beaumont, tell me where the sale is, and I'll run and buy in the cabinet for you.

Sir B. I beg you'll do no such thing, young man. I buy it; what for?

Tom. To give it to Miss Rosewood [*aside to him*], or I shall tell Mr. Rosewood your intentions towards her.

Sir B. [*Aside*] The devil! here's some treachery!

Lucy. Give it to me! I don't want it, Tom!

Tom. You do! you can't live without it. [*Aside*] You can't be married without it!

Lucy. Law, bless me! what can that have to do with it?

Tom. Will you buy the cabinet?

Sir B. What shall I do with this impertinent rascal?

Rose. Tom, Tom, what are you saying to Sir Beaumont?

Tom. I'm saying, that here are two letters—addressed to—[*aside*] will you buy the cabinet?

Sir B. [*Aside*] My letters! Confound the fellow!

Rose. Addressed to whom? What letters!

Sir B. Buy it—buy it, by all means. If Miss Rosewood will accept of it, I'm sure—

Rose. Lucy, accept!

Lucy. Oh yes, uncle. I can't tell you how delighted I am!

Tom. [*Aside*] Lucy! you're an angel! I love you! I adore you! [*To Sir B.*] Where shall I find it?

Sir B. At Oxenham's; but you must make haste, I fancy

Tom. Won't I! [*Runs out,* R.U.E.]

Rose. What's the matter with the lad? Lucy, do you know?

Lucy. Not exactly, uncle; but I think I can guess.

Sir B. [*Aside*] Is this caprice; or deliberate treason?

Rose. What is it, then? for Sir Beaumont seems as puzzled as I am.

Lucy Why Tom is anxious, I suppose, that your famous cabinet shouldn't be knocked down to a broker in Seven Dials, as you said yourself it might be this morning. He knows how proud you are of it, and wishes me to possess it for your sake.

Rose. Well—bless me! that's very kind of Tom; but he shouldn't have asked Sir Beaumont to buy it for you: it's very wrong—very indelicate. Sir Beaumont, I'm quite ashamed—

Sir B. Don't name it, Mr. Rosewood, if it's any gratification to your fair niece. [*Aside*] There is some mys-

tery in this I cannot fathom. That simple looking baggage is as deep as Lucifer!

[*Re-enter* TOM, R.U.E., *out of breath, with a catalogue in his hand.*

Tom. Too late! gone! sale over! an early lot—paid for and carried away—porter not to be found—purchaser not known. But I'll find him, if he's above ground.

Lucy. Tom! Tom! you'll be ill!

Rose. Tom, my good lad, I'm much flattered by the interest you take; but really there's no occasion—

Enter a CARTER, R.U.E.

Carter [*reading a card*] Mr. Rosewood!

Rose. Well what is it?

Car. I've brought some furniture, by order of the Hon. Mrs. Crushton, of Cavendish Square [*gives card*].

Sir B. Mrs. Crushton.

Rose. Oh, very well. The lady you were kind enough to recommend me to, Sir Beaumont. [*To Carter*] Is it to be left here?

Car. Yes, the lady bought it at our auction rooms. Two small tables and a cabinet.

All. A cabinet!

Tom. A cabinet—where—[*runs to door*].

Car. You're to pack them and send them into the country I believe, but the lady will call.

Tom. It is, it is! Hurrah! Come you sir, lend a hand here, quick. [*Drags out the Carter*, R.U.E.]

Rose. Well, how very curious, it is the one I made for the Colonel!

Sir B. [*Aside*] So we shall learn now, perhaps, the cause of that fellow's anxiety.

Enter TOM, CARTER *and* MAN, *carrying the Cabinet*, R.U.E.

Tom. Here, here, put it down anywhere. Now, master, how many drawers are there in it?—one, two, three, four.—

[*Opening them rapidly and looking in all.*

Rose. [*Triumphantly.*] Aye, aye, Tom, if you can find out that, you're a clever fellow. Sir Beaumont knows, I'll be bound.

Sir B. Not I. I never took the trouble to count them.

Rose. Count them, sir! The difficulty's to find them. There are three so ingeniously contrived—

Tom. There's one, and nothing in it.

Sir B. Nothing! Why, what did you exp ct to find in it?

Tom. There's another, and nothing in that!

Rose. Ah, now, the third—that's the puzzle—that's the triumph of art. [*Watches* Tom, *who is searching eagerly.*] No, no, you've no notion. Here Sir Beaumont, if you really don't know—isn't this ingenious. You see you first do so, and then so, and crack, back flies this piece—and—

Tom [*Snatches a packet out of the secret drawer which Rosewood discovers*] Here it is for a hundred!

All. Here's what?

Tom. [*Reading the superscription*] Yes, yes! "To Lionel Manvers, Esq." [*Runs to door of warehouse.*] Mr. Manvers! Miss Mortimer!

Enter Lionel *and* Miss M. l.2 e.

Sir B. They here! together!

Tom. Mr. Manvers, there's a packet for you from your late uncle. It has been some time on the road.

Lio. [*reading*] It is my uncle's hand.

Tom. I'll swear to it.

Lio. [*Breaks the seal and examines the contents.*] A will.

Sir B. The devil! written

Lio. [*Reads*] "Memorandum.—In case of my death, I hereby bequeath the whole of my personal property to my beloved nephew, Lionel Manvers, Esq., with a request that he will pay 500*l.* per annum to his cousin, Sir Beaumont Cressy, during the term of his natural life, and give 1000*l.* sterling money of Great Britain to Thomas Polish, son of my late coachman and faithful servant.

Signed, Richard Cressy."

Sir B. Confusion!—by whom is the will witnessed?

Lio. By no one. It is dated in 1837, when witnesses were not required for personal property. I presume you will not dispute the validity of this document?

Sir B. I presume it would be useless, and therefore certainly shall not. Only 500*l.* a-year! I shall be cut dead by the ugliest Choryphee at the opera! [*Exit.*

Lio. For you to whom I owe my fortune—

Miss M. And I perhaps my life.

All. Her life!

Tom. [*Aside to her*] Don't mention it—not a word about the Green Man

Miss M. Oh, but I must. Mr. Manvers must kno

the service you rendered me, by stopping our runaway horses.

Lio. On Blackheath. Why, Tom, was it Miss Mortimer who—

Tom. [*Aside*] Don't mention it! don't think of it! forget you ever heard it! bury it in oblivion as I shall do! No more romances; no more pit tickets; no more yellow kids! Lucy! let great folks marry great folks, and little ones little ones I've a thousand pounds to commence business with, and I demand your hand in lawful wedlock.

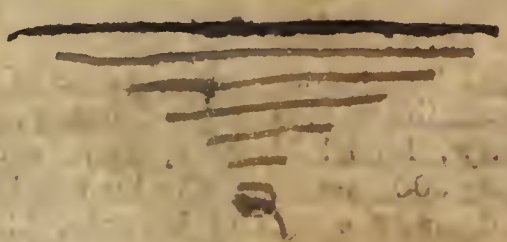
Lucy. Law, Tom, there's no occasion to *demand* it: is there uncle?

Rose. Not as far as you're concerned seemingly; and as the lad has got 1000*l.*—If I could be sure that—

Lio. Consent, Mr. Rosewood, and I'll triple the sum.

Rose O then, with all my heart, Mr. Manvers, and I'll take him into partnership if he pleases.

Tom. No! will you tho'! Then we'll drive a roaring business in no time. I'll work like a horse to bring custom to the shop. May I hope to be favoured with your patronage [*to audience*]. There's no house in the trade can boast a finer stock of furniture, and as we have very few *orders* your commands will be most punctually and respectfully attended to by Rosewood, Polish, and Company.



THE END